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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: TOP STORIES, SECRETARY CLINTON'S VISIT, TERRORISM/MILITARY, POLITICAL, ECON/BUSINESS, MISCELLANEOUS -

OCTOBER 29, 2009

Summary: Reports and photographs of a powerful bomb explosion at a crowded market in Peshawar killing over 100 people dominated all front pages on Thursday and somewhat overshadowed coverage of Secretary Clinton's first day of the official visit to Pakistan. Nevertheless, all newspapers and TV channels highlighted her meetings with senior Pakistani officials, and other engagements. Secretary Clinton's desire to "speak directly to the people of Pakistan," and to "reverse some of the misperceptions" resonated well with all the dailies which also highlighted unveiling of 125 million dollar U.S. program to support Pakistan's energy development. Commenting on Secretary Clinton's visit, the English language daily, "The Nation," noted that the visit "has not brought anything new for the Pakistani people." Another English daily, "Business Recorder," observed that "her (Secretary Clinton's) curtain-raiser that U.S. wants to turn a 'new page' in ties with Pakistan is welcome but nobody would like to see that page inscribed with Joe's (Biden) 'Pakistan first.'" In other news, reports that the security forces surrounded Kaniguram, an important base of Uzbek militants in South Waziristan also figure prominently. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: "Peshawar Bomb Targets Women, Children" "Dawn" (10/29)

"At least 101 people, mostly women and children, were killed and over 150 injured when a huge car bomb ripped through a crowded market in Peshawar on Wednesday. The blast triggered a huge fire which engulfed a number of buildings near the Meena Bazaar. A plume of dust and smoke billowed from narrow lanes of the market situated in the old part of the city." (Story also front paged in all newspapers)

News Story: "\$125 million energy aid plan unveiled" "Business Recorder" (10/29)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Wednesday unveiled a 125-million-dollar program to improve the country's inadequate electricity supply. Hillary also announced the first phase of the energy program, which would help repair power facilities and promote energy efficiency. The projects, she said, have been designed in close collaboration and consultations with Pakistan government.... Addressing a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, she said her country wants to open a new chapter in relations for a strong and stable Pakistan. (Story also front paged

in all newspapers)

SECRETARY CLINTON'S VISIT

News Story: "Hillary Cautions Against Playing Up U.S.-Pak Differences" "Dawn" 10/29)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton kicked off on Wednesday her mission to win hearts and minds of Pakistanis by reaching out to the people and clarifying to them Washington's intentions and commitments for Pakistan. 'We are going to do everything we can to speak directly to the people of Pakistan. I'm specifically here to reverse some of those misperceptions. I feel very strongly about it,' said Ms. Clinton at a joint media conference with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi at the Foreign Office after their meeting." (Story also front paged in all newspapers)

News Story: "Pakistan Has Clear Vision Against Militancy" "The News" (10/29)

"Pakistan on Wednesday told the U.S. that it has a clear vision and strategy to root out militancy from its soil while at the same time it will not compromise on its national security interests. President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani told the visiting U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, in their separate meetings in Islamabad that the country needed assistance in critical areas of social and economic development."

News Story: "Pakistan wants to build long term partnership with U.S.: PM" "The News" (10/29)

"Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Wednesday said that

Pakistan wishes to build a long term and stable partnership with the U.S. based on mutual trust and respect. Talking to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Prime Minister urged the U.S. administration to support Pakistan by enhancing trade between the two countries through increased market access rather than aid. The U.S. should hence start negotiations on Free Trade Agreement with Pakistan, he added."

News Story: "Pakistan to Help U.S. Win Over Moderate Taliban: Hillary" "The News" (10/29)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that the U.S., with the help of Pakistani government and intelligence agencies, is engaging in a process to separate those groups of the Taliban who were not committed with the ideology of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan. The Pakistani government can do the same in the case of Pakistan as well, she said."

News Story: "Hillary Condemns Peshawar Attack" "Daily Times" (10/29)

"Hillary pledged all-out support for Pakistan, which is currently reeling from a barrage of terrorist attacks, including one that ripped through a crowded market in Peshawar hours after she arrived in Pakistan. She condemned the Peshawar attack, and praised the army's efforts in the war on terror."

News Story: "Best Man Should Head ISI, Kerry-Lugar Bill 'Misinterpreted'" "Daily Times" (10/29)

The U.S. is not pressurizing Pakistan to accept the Kerry-Lugar legislation and the country can refuse to take the aid package, U.S. secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Wednesday. According to a private TV channel, Clinton told reporters that Pakistan's concerns over the legislation were due to a misinterpretation of the legislation.... 'Whoever heads ISI, he should be competent and the best choice (of Pakistan),' she said."

News Story: "All Set For Hillary's Lahore visit" "Dawn" (10/29)

"More than 1,000 police will perform security and other related duties during the Lahore visit of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Thursday (today)."

News Story: "Lahore Police Rehearse For Hillary's Security" "Daily

Times" (10/29)

"Security personnel on Wednesday stage a rehearsal of the security arrangements along the route U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's convoy will travel upon her arrival to the city on Thursday (today).

News Story: "Hillary May Not Visit Data Darbar" "Dawn" (10/29)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton may not visit the shrine of Hazrat Data Gunj Bakhsh and some other places during her stay in the city on Thursday (today) because of security reasons, according to official sources on Wednesday."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: "Troops surround 'Uzbek base' in S. Waziristan" "Dawn" (10/29)

"Security forces have surrounded Kaniguram, an important base of Uzbek militants in South Waziristan, from three directions and preparing to storm the town. Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira and Armed Forces Spokesman Maj-Gen Athar Abbas told newsmen on Wednesday that important fronts around the town had been secured." (Story also front paged in all newspapers)

News Story: "Sadda Placed Under Indefinite Curfew" "Dawn" (10/29)

"The local administration imposed a curfew for an indefinite period in Sadda, the tehsil headquarters of Lower Kurram tribal region, on Wednesday."

News Story: "Taliban, Al-Qaeda Disown Blast" "The News" (10/29)

"The Taliban and al-Qaeda have denied involvement in the Peshawar bomb blast and said they do not explode bombs in bazaars and mosques. According to a statement of al-Qaeda, they are not involved in the killing of innocent people. According to al-Qaeda sources, the elements, who want to defame Jihad and refugees, are behind the Peshawar bomb blast."

News Story: "Death Toll From Attack Highest in Peshawar's History" "Daily Times" (10/29)

"Wednesday's bomb blast in the provincial capital was the worst in the city's 2,000-year history, as the previous highest death toll in such a despicable attack was 66, way back in 1996."

News Story: "UN, U.S., U.K. outraged at Peshawar blast" "Daily Times" (10/29)

"UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon on Wednesday said he was outraged by the 'appalling' bomb attack in Peshawar. Ban condemned the 'appalling bomb attack in Peshawar today' and said, 'I want to express my outrage at the loss of so many innocent lives.'... Separately, the White House condemned the terrorist attack in Peshawar and expressed condolences to the victims. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said the bombing showed the extent to which terrorists were willing to go and the type of threat they posed for both Pakistan and the U.S. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband called the attack in Peshawar 'despicable.'"

News Story: "Forces Close In On Srarogha" "The News" (10/29)

"Security forces were only a few kilometers from Srarogha, the stronghold of the Hakimullah Mehsud-led militants, on the 12th day of the operation Rah-e-Nijat in South Waziristan Agency on Wednesday. Sources said some militants were fleeing to North Waziristan from the Srarogha side and via the Shawal Road from Makeen due to increased pressure from the advancing troops."

News Story: "Terrorists Getting Over \$5 Billion From ATT: ISPR" "Business Recorder" (10/29)

"Terrorists are getting over \$5 billion from Afghan Transit Trade, besides funding from local and foreign organizations who want to fulfill their agendas, said Major General Athar Abbas, Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) in Islamabad on

Wednesday."

News Story: "U.S. Not Quitting The Region, Says White House" "Dawn" (10/29)

"Hours after deadly terror attacks killed scores of people in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the White House assured the world on Wednesday that it had no plans to quit the region. Recent reports in the international media had suggested that a rapid increase in attacks on U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan might force the United States to leave that country."

Editorial: "Hillary's Tubewells!" an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (10/29)

"Hillary Clinton's visit has not brought anything new for the Pakistani people.... On our energy problem, Ms. Clinton merely declared that the U.S. is committed to addressing the issue; but if its way of dealing with it is to demand that we end subsidies and abandon the Iran pipeline project then we are better off without their help. If the U.S. is serious it should sign an India-like civil nuclear deal with Pakistan but who out of the present leadership will demand this and stick to it? And that is the problem with Pakistan's U.S. relationship. The U.S. approach towards Pakistan was summed up in the visual of Holbrooke slumped in his chair, chewing gum nonchalantly in the talks. After all, they have what they want from Pakistan. Our tragedy is that amongst all the U.S.-groveling, there is no one left to speak for Pakistan."

Editorial: "The Shifting Sands" an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (10/29)

"As a directly affected neighbor of Afghanistan we are caught by the dilemma - more U.S. troops mean more pressure on Afghan Taliban

triggering greater inflow of Afghan refugees and lesser troops mean unprotected border with danger of free-flow of infiltrators like the one we had when U.S. vacated some of its posts on Afghan border adjacent to South Waziristan. Now that Secretary of State Clinton is here the host government should apprise her of the negative fallout of slogans like VP Biden's 'Pakistan first'. Her curtain-raiser that U.S. wants to turn a 'new page' in ties with Pakistan is welcome but nobody would like to see that page inscribed with Joe's 'Pakistan first.' Mind you Pakistani military is fighting "militants" and not the "Taliban" in South Waziristan - a role-reversal not merely of semantics but the one that is dictated by the emerging ground reality."

Editorial: "Turning The Page" an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (10/29)

"The conflation of 'Af/Pak' in the minds of American strategists who may be unfamiliar with the region and its complex cultural weave has led to a 'running together' of the two nations as if they were somehow extensions of one another rather than discrete entities. In terms of policy towards Pakistan the American administration has been described as 'dithering' both on a Pakistani independent TV channel and in print. 'Dithering' we don't need at this point. 'Decisive' and 'clear' we do. Over to you, Mrs. Clinton."

Editorial: "Peshawar Bombing" an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (10/29)

"The grotesqueness of the bombing cannot be overstated; a place chock-full of civilians was deliberately targeted and the bomb hidden in a car was meant to cause the maximum loss of life possible. What was the motive?... Counter-terrorism measures in the cities are being ramped up, but arguably the time has come to discard slow and desultory measures and instead deploy a dragnet to scoop up all manner of suspects across the country. A few dozen suspects arrested here and another handful detained there are yielding breakthroughs, but the intelligence and law-enforcement personnel are well behind the steep curve of violence. As the militants ramp up their terror campaign, the state must be more forceful in its counter-terrorism measures."

Editorial: "Blitzed" an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (10/29)

"Extremism, whatever the historical reasons that are bent around trying to understand it and place it in our national and cultural context, now envelops all of us in a deadly and debilitating cloud.... The government is standing fast and firm in Waziristan, but the blowback is there for us all to see every day.... There will be other blasts in the future, as there have been today and in the past. Some terrorists we will intercept, but it only needs one to get through. The blitz they inflict on us may be awful but we must show our resolve, our unwillingness to be cowed, and say 'No, you shall not pass, neither shall we give you relief now get you hence, Beast, because this is our land, not yours.'"

Editorial: "Peshawar Massacre" an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (10/29)

"The country has seen an increase in such attacks as the military carries out an operation against Taliban militants in South Waziristan. The federal and provincial governments have to remain steadfast in curbing the ongoing militancy. The militants are trying to use terror attacks as baits so that the government may be pressurized into ending the military operation in Waziristan. Once these areas are cleared of the Taliban, the government should ensure that extremists do not re-emerge in the area. The operation in Waziristan should be taken to its logical end, as leaving it halfway could prove to be disastrous."

Editorial: "Rah-e-Nijat Should Not Be Limitless" an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (10/29)

"Being Army Chief and in charge of the operation, he is naturally in a better position to judge the ground situation and come out with this kind of analysis. It could also be a message to the militants that the army has no intention to roll back the operation and would

take it to its logical conclusion. It is important that the armed forces must fully accomplish the job this time as incomplete operations of the past created more complications and encouraged terrorists to persist with their anti-state activities. Therefore, the operation should be decisive."

Editorial: "A Regional Approach To Afghanistan" an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (10/29)

"Many critics in Pakistan think that peace will return to Afghanistan and Pakistan if the U.S.-NATO forces leave Afghanistan. They also link 'normalization' of Pakistan's internal situation to this grand exit. There are others who simply want to relish the 'defeat' of the Americans in Afghanistan without paying regard to what will happen in Afghanistan and the region this time around. It is quite obvious that if the neighbors pursue their separate strategies they will only end up hurting each other.... Pakistan has an entre in the SCO (Shanghai cooperation Organization). It has China there as its friend. The only problem country is India with which it is trying to get into a 'normalizing' dialogue. In America too some sensible critics of Washington's policy want a 'regional' approach to Afghanistan to replace the armies of reluctant NATO states cowed by increasingly threatening Gallup polls at home."

"New Strategic Reshuffle In The Region" an op-ed by Nazir Naji in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (10/29)

"Secretary Clinton is visiting the region at a time when the Obama Administration is in utter confusion regarding its Afghan policy. The Taliban have increased the frequency of suicide attacks in which hundreds of the foreign troops have been killed. They want to further lower the morale of U.S. and the NATO forces present on their soil before Hillary Clinton's visit of Kabul. The Afghan war has become the hottest issue of debate among influential political circle and policy-makers in Washington. The Obama Administration and the top U.S. military officials are suspicious that Pakistan is supporting the Taliban fighters. They are sure that without such clandestine backing, the Taliban cannot continue their resistance."

It seems that Secretary Clinton's visit is a fact-finding mission and the Obama Administration will formulate its new Afghan policy in light of her report."

"Light Is Not Far Away" an op-ed by Hamid Mir in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (10/29)

"The roaming of armed Americans on the roads of Islamabad has become a routine matter. A few days back, the police arrested four U.S. nationals along with their weapons on the Jinnah Avenue, but they were released immediately on the orders of Inspector General Islamabad Police. As per reports, some relatives of this top cop have rented their houses to the Americans, so he has 'good' reason to entertain the Americans. But a large majority of Pakistanis cannot barter their national honor for dollars. The Obama Administration must keep it in mind that the so-called liberal NGOs, which are going to be the major beneficiaries of dollars under the Kerry-Lugar Bill, can do nothing to help lessen the hatred against the United States among Pakistanis."

Opinion: "Waziristan: The Last Bastion Of Terrorists" an op-ed by Shaukat Qadir in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (10/29)

"So far the army is meeting its timetable for the offensive, but progress from here onwards is likely to be much slower as the lines of communication are extended and become vulnerable to guerrilla action. Despite the difficulties, it appears that the Pakistan Army is likely to succeed in retaking South Waziristan; while the U.S. helps both protagonists!"

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: "Presidency Left With Single Option" "The News" (10/29)

"Events that will unfold in the next one month may prove critical for the future of Asif Ali Zardari as the President of Pakistan,

according to several knowledgeable politicians, well-placed officials and an important presidential aide."

News Story: "Zardari, Nawaz Discussed Power" "Dawn" (10/29)

"All that happened at a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif was a discussion on power sharing, says Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid President Chaudhry Shujaat Husain.... He said that hype was created around the meeting of two 'big' leaders, but both 'failed' to register any progress on any of the national issues."

News Story: "Nisar Vows No Easy NRO Passage As Na Committee Meets Today" "Daily Times" (10/29)

"The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) will resist the ruling Pakistan People's Party's (PPP) efforts to get the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) passed through a parliamentary committee smoothly, PML-N Leader Chaudhry Nisar said on Wednesday."

ECON/BUSINESS

News Story: "Provinces Offered Up To 60pc Of Divisible Pool" "Dawn" (10/29)

"The federal government offered three options to the provinces on Wednesday about their share in the divisible pool in the next National Finance Commission award - 50, 55 or 60 per cent. 'It is not possible for the federation to give anything beyond 60 per cent in the current fiscal situation,' an official of the finance ministry said after a preparatory meeting of the secretaries' committee of the commission ahead of an NFC meeting scheduled to be held in Peshawar on Thursday and Friday."

MISCELLANEOUS

News Story: "NA Committee Probing Blackwater Presence In Pakistan To

Meet Today" "Daily Times" (10/29)

News Story: "Six UN Staff Among 12 Killed In Kabul Attack" "The News" (10/29)

"Taliban militants wearing suicide vests and police uniforms stormed a guest house used by the UN staff in the heart of the Afghan capital early on Wednesday, killing 12 people, including six UN staff members."

News Story: "New U.S. Defence Bill Will 'Pay' Taliban To Switch Sides" "Daily Times" (10/29)

"The Defence Bill U.S. President Barack Obama will sign into law today (Wednesday) contains a new provision that would pay Taliban who renounce the insurgency, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin said on Tuesday."

News Story: "New U.S. Bill May Ban Iran's Gas Suppliers" "Daily Times" (10/29)

"Iran's main gas suppliers, including British, French, Swiss and Indian firms, may face tough U.S. sanctions under a bill that sailed through a key House of Representatives panel on Wednesday. By a voice vote, the House Foreign Affairs Committee approved legislation aimed at tightening the economic vise on the Islamic republic over its suspected nuclear program, which the West charges hides an effort to get atomic weapons."

News Story: "Ramzi's Wife Dubs U.S. Inhumane" "The Nation" (10/29)

"The United States, the so-called champion of human rights has scant regard for the humanity and it has wrecked havoc with the meaning of justice and humanity. The wife of Abdul Basit alias Ramzi Yousaf expressed these views during an exclusive talk with 'The Nation' during her visit to Karachi from Zahidan, Iran on Wednesday."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson